

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 23 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 12 and 23 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

By the Office Action, Claims 1 to 4, 7 to 15, 18 to 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent 6,564,206 (Ikeda) and U.S. Patent 6,556,723 (Craver), Claims 5 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ikeda, Craver and U.S. Patent 6,292,164 (Soohoo), and Claims 6 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ikeda, Craver and U.S. Patent 5,878,414 (Miike). The claim rejections are traversed under 35 U.S.C. § 103(c).

More particularly, in view of the application's January 27, 2000 filing date, Ikeda is not prior art for purposes of a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), since the Ikeda patent and the invention of the present application were either commonly owned or subject to an obligation of a common assignment to Canon Inc. at the time of invention of the subject matter of the present application.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the claim rejections based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised by the Office Action, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,

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Respectfully submitted,



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